

Nottingham Trent University

Validation Service

Academic Liaison Tutor Handbook 2019/20

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Validation Service is a collaborative arrangement between Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and a partner organisation that does not have its own degree awarding powers. The partner delivers its own courses to its own students at its own delivery premises, and is designated by NTU as a Validated Centre. The courses are validated and awarded by NTU.
- 1.2 The University appoints an academic liaison tutor to each course or cognate groups of courses at a validated centre.
- 1.3 The academic liaison tutor is an academic member of staff appointed from the relevant University link school who has broad knowledge of the discipline area for the course or cognate group of courses to which they are appointed.
- 1.4 For some large, or complex, provision a separate examination board liaison is appointed.
- 1.5 For courses with an approved progression route to an NTU course, additional duties are undertaken.
- 1.6 As a newly appointed or current academic liaison tutor, this handbook provides you with the information you need to undertake the role. It should be read in conjunction with the following documents which can be found on the [CADQ website](#):
 - a. Quality Handbook Section 10C: Validation Service collaborative provision
 - b. Quality Handbook Supplement (QHS) VS8: Academic liaison tutor role requirements

2. Appointment

- 2.1 The academic liaison tutor role is for a fixed term of three years, in line with the current course approval period. At the end of the tenure you may be asked to participate in the Periodic Collaborative Review of the Validated Centre and its courses.
- 2.2 You should be given sufficient time to undertake the duties associated with the role. This will vary according to the nature and size of the collaboration. This should have been agreed with your Head of Department on appointment and included within the Management of Academic Workload. The time allowance is reviewed and agreed annually with your Head of Department.
- 2.3 If you are an academic liaison tutor for a course with an approved progression route to NTU, you will need an additional time allowance to enable you to undertake the increased duties associated with this role.
- 2.4 In addition to this handbook, you will receive the following documentation to support you in the role:
 - a. The approved course documentation, including the course and module specifications;
 - b. Common assessment regulations in use at the partner institution;
 - c. The Centre Document which includes relevant policies and processes.
- 2.5 Updated course documentation will be provided in the event of any changes to the course or Centre policies.

3. Key responsibilities

- 3.1 The primary role of the academic liaison tutor is to:
 - a. ensure, through a spirit of partnership, that the academic standards, quality and student learning opportunities are maintained.
 - b. act as a critical friend, providing advice and guidance, and facilitating two way communication between the partner and the University.
- 3.2 You will be the main University contact for the course team, and you may engage in academic debate about, for example, teaching and learning, the nature of the subject and research. You should, however, avoid imposing specific views upon a partner, for example in relation to approaches to teaching and learning.
- 3.3 The key responsibilities associated with the academic liaison tutor role are set out in Quality Handbook section QHS VS8.
- 3.4 If you are the academic liaison tutor for a course with an approved progression route to NTU, you will have additional duties. These include ensuring the ongoing alignment of the provision and facilitating student progression to the University. The additional responsibilities are detailed in paragraph 3.2 of QHS VS8.
- 3.5 You should not provide regular staff development sessions for the partner, engage in the day to day operation of the course or prepare the partner for academic approval or periodic review, other than to advise on changes to existing courses.

4. Visits

- 4.1 You should visit the partner at least once per academic year. Where a partner is locally based, you may wish to visit more than once; however, this should be agreed and included in your time allowance.
- 4.2 In preparing for your visit(s) it is useful to familiarise yourself with the approved course documentation, and to read through the academic liaison tutor report template. If you require additional information from the partner to support your visit, you should request this in advance with sufficient notice.
- 4.3 During the visit you may want to undertake the following activities:
 - a. Meet with the course team to discuss the ongoing operation of the course
 - b. Meet with current students to discuss learning opportunities
 - c. Review a sample of assessment to establish the appropriateness of assessment practices
 - d. Attend teaching sessions where possible and appropriateIf you make more than one visit these activities can be spread across visits.
- 4.4 You should attend the Board of Examiners, except where a separate examination board liaison is appointed. In order to attend the Board you may need to make an additional visit. For international partners, you may attend the Board via electronic means if a visit has been undertaken earlier in the year.
- 4.5 For UK partners, you are welcome to liaise directly with the course team to arrange your visit, and to agree a schedule of activities. Please inform [CADQ](#) when you have made the arrangements so that we can record the details of your visit.
- 4.6 For international partners, CADQ will make arrangements with the partner for your visit. We will liaise with you directly to agree dates, and a schedule. We will also make appropriate travel arrangements (see paragraph 9.3 below).

- 4.7 For courses with an approved progression route to NTU, you will need to make additional visits in order to facilitate student progression. For example you may need to:
- a. Participate in the induction of new students to provide an introduction to NTU and outline the progression route.
 - b. Provide guest lectures or arrange for colleagues to undertake these.
 - c. Facilitate student visits to NTU.
 - d. Support the application process.
 - e. Undertake any bridging requirements.

5. Reporting

- 5.1 You are required to produce a written report within one month of each visit to the partner.
- 5.2 Where more than one visit is made during the academic year, an interim report may be produced. You must produce an interim report if you have identified significant concerns relating to standards, quality or student learning opportunities following a visit. An interim report can be prepared on the standard report template, recognising that you may not be able to complete all the sections at the interim stage.
- 5.3 Please submit any interim reports via email to [Hedley Emmens](#). A copy of your report will be shared with the course team at the partner institution. CADQ will forward this on your behalf.
- 5.4 A final report is produced within one month of the final visit to the partner in an academic year. The report draws on findings from visits and ongoing dialogue with the partner throughout the year. The final report may expand or build on findings set out in an interim report.
- 5.5 The purpose of the final report is to provide both the partner and the University with a summary of findings in relation to standards, quality and student learning opportunities.
- 5.6 The final report should identify any areas of best practice which may be shareable across other courses at the partner, or with the University.
- 5.7 You may also want to make recommendations for enhancements to the provision. Recommendations may be addressed specifically to the course team, to the partner more broadly or to the University. When making recommendations, you should consider the amount of change that a partner can reasonably be expected to make in an academic session, and avoid making significant numbers of recommendations. It is useful for the partner (and the University) if you identify recommendations that may be of higher or lower priority.
- 5.8 Reports should be produced using the template provided by CADQ. The following templates are available on the [CADQ website](#):
- a. Academic liaison tutor standard report template
 - b. Academic liaison tutor report template for courses with a progression route to NTU
 - c. Academic liaison board of examiners report template
- 5.9 If you are unsure which template to use please contact [Hedley Emmens](#).

- 5.10 Please submit your report via email to [Hedley Emmens](#). A copy of your report will be shared with the course team at the partner institution. CADQ will forward this on your behalf.
- 5.11 If you wish to raise significant concerns about standards, quality or student learning opportunities, you do not need to wait to submit a report to do this. In this instance, please contact **Hedley Emmens on 88194** or **Victoria Fanning on 88187** to discuss your concerns and we will determine an appropriate course of action.
- 5.12 If your report contains negative responses to any of the yes/no questions in the template, it will be submitted to the Validation Service Sub-Committee (VSSC) for consideration. VSSC will determine an appropriate course of action and liaise with you about such action to be taken.

6. Annual monitoring

- 6.1 The course team is required to submit a Course Standards and Quality Report (CSQR) to the University on an annual basis. These reports are reviewed at VSSC, along with a copy of your final report.
- 6.2 The CSQR includes a response to the academic liaison tutor report, including any action to be taken as a result of recommendations made. As such, you will receive a copy of the CSQR, which should be taken as the partner's formal response to your report.
- 6.3 You are not required to formally respond to the CSQR; however, if you have any concerns about areas of the report, you are welcome to raise them with CADQ and appropriate action will be taken as necessary.

7. External examiners

- 7.1 An external examiner is appointed to each course at a Validated Centre. External examiners are contracted to, and paid by, the University.
- 7.2 The Validated Centre is responsible for nominating a suitable external examiner in consultation with you as the academic liaison tutor. The course team may seek recommendations from you for suitable nominees.
- 7.3 External examiner nominations are considered and approved by the University's External Examiner Appointments Panel. The Validated Centre submits the nomination using the NTU template EE4, which is available [here](#). Section C of the nomination form must be completed by you in advance of the nomination being submitted for approval.
- 7.4 Newly appointed external examiners are invited to attend an NTU induction session, held twice annually. Where possible, a joint induction will be undertaken by NTU and the partner. You will be invited to attend the induction over lunch, in order to meet new external examiner.
- 7.5 External examiners attend the Board of Examiners at the Validated Centre and sign a conferment statement. If you are not attending the Board of Examiners, you may wish to discuss any findings in relation to standards and quality with the external examiner in advance of the board.
- 7.6 External examiners submit an annual report via the NTU online reporting system. You will receive a copy of the report from CADQ. You are not required to formally respond to the report; however, if you have any concerns about matters raised in the report you are welcome to discuss them with CADQ.

8. Changes to courses

- 8.1 Validated Centres may wish to make changes to a course as a result of recommendations made by you or the external examiner, or for any other reason. Changes to courses are submitted to the University for approval either at VSSC or through an approval panel (depending on the nature and scale of the changes proposed).
- 8.2 Course teams are encouraged to discuss any proposed changes with you in advance of submission for approval. Validated Centres are required to summarise their discussions with you on the '*making changes to courses*' template.
- 8.3 A copy of the '*making changes to courses*' template is available [here](#).

9. Travel arrangements and expenses

- 9.1 CADQ can assist you with any travel arrangements for your visits to the Validated Centre. All travel is booked in accordance with NTU's Travel and Expenses Policy. We can book the following for you:
 - a. Flights
 - b. Hotels
 - c. Transfers, including taxi hire or train tickets
- 9.2 Unfortunately, we are not able to book taxis for short distance travel within Nottingham.
- 9.3 If you require travel arrangements for your visit, please contact [CADQ](#). Please make sure you provide sufficient notice for travel bookings. A minimum of two months' notice for flight bookings is requested.
- 9.4 Advance subsistence is provided for members of staff travelling overseas and covers the cost of meals only. For additional costs, please ensure you keep all receipts for the purpose of claiming back on expenses. Please consult NTU's Travel and Expenses policy for full details on how and what you can claim for.
- 9.5 Expenses claims need to be made against the Validated Centre's budget code. If you are unsure, please contact [CADQ](#) to obtain the correct code.

10. Staff development

- 10.1 Validated Centres may ask their academic liaison tutor to undertake staff development. Whilst the University is open to offering staff development, in the spirit of sharing good practice with our partners, you should instruct the Validated Centre to contact CADQ with the request. A charge will be applied for any staff development undertaken, in accordance with the Financial Schedule.

11. Support from CADQ

- 11.1 CADQ manages the ongoing relationship with Validated Centres and will work closely with you in your role as academic liaison tutor. The following support is provided:
 - a. Annual development workshops
 - b. Academic liaison tutor [webpages](#)
 - c. Academic liaison tutor handbook
 - d. Travel arrangements for visits

e. General advice and guidance

11.2 Please feel free to contact [Hedley Emmens](#) for any advice, guidance or support.